WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Declining area of arable land

†1794. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the total area of arable land in the country at present;

(b) the extent of decline in said arable land that took place during the last three years;

(c) to what extent agricultural production have been affected due to the said decline; and

(d) whether barren and Government's land holding would be allotted for agriculture purposes to expand the area of arable land?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) As per available Land Use Statistics, arable land, measured in terms of cultivated area and area that can be brought under cultivation in the country, remains more or less stable at 183 million hectares over 4 to 5 years.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Land and its management falls within the jurisdiction of States as provided under the constitution. The Ministry of Rural Development monitors land reform programmes implemented by the States/UTs including distribution of Government Wasteland to the eligible poor. By September 2006, 148.55 lakh acres of waste land have been distributed.

Production of crops

†1795. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the crops the production of which have increased and the crops the production which has decreased during the last three years;

(b) the extent of decrease in the production of wheat, pulses and sugarcane; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) the reasons for decrease in the production and the steps being taken to boost the production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) The details of production of major crops during the last three years from 2003-04 to 2005-06 are given in the table below:

Name of Crop	Production (Million Tonnes)		
	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06*
Rice	88.53	83.13	91.04
Wheat	72.15	68.64	69.48
Coarse Cereals	37.60	33.46	34.67
Pulses	14.91	13.13	13.11
Foodgrains	213.19	198.36	208.30
Oilseeds	25.19	24.35	27.73
Sugarcane	233.86	237.09	278.39
Cotton (Million bales of 170 kg each)	13.73	16.43	19.57

*4th advance estimates released on 15.07.2006

While the production of wheat has decreased by 2.67 million tonnes between 2003-04 and 2005-06, production of pulses has declined by 1.80 million tonnes during the same period. However, production of sugarcane has increased by 44.53 million tonnes between 2003-04 and 2005-06.

(c) Deficient rains from the south-west monsoon during 2004-05 and abnormal rise in temperature in February 2006 in States of north-western region affected mainly the production of wheat and pulses. In order to increase the production of cereals under specific crop based systems, Integrated Cereals Development Programme in Wheat Based Cropping Systems Areas (ICDP-Wheat) and Integrated Cereals Development Programme in Coarse Cereals Based Cropping Systems Areas (ICDP-Coarse Cereals) under Macro Management of Agriculture (MMA) are under implementation in the country as Centrally sponsored scheme. The

Centrally sponsored "Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds, Pulses, Oilpalm and Maize (ISOPOM)" is under implementation from 1st April 2004 to increase production of pulses, among others.

Agricultural crisis

1796. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY:
SHRI MOINUL HASSAN:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is an agricultural crisis in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor alongwith the effect of globalisation in agrarian crisis;

(c) whether high rate of interest and indebtness are the primary cause of suicide among the farmers;

(d) if so, the measures proposed to be taken by Government to alleviate the problems being faced by the farmers;

(e) whether there is some proposal to bring private financiers under some regulation and to revive cooperative system; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) In the recent times, there has been a deceleration in the growth of agriculture. This is mainly because of drought and other natural calamities as well as problems like inadequate investment, low irrigated area, inadequate flow of credit, low productivity, and inadequate marketing infrastructure. These problems have caused hardships to the farmers in some areas of the country.

India has a surplus of exports over imports in agriculture trade. Under the existing WTO rules, India can, *inter alia*, protect its farmers by raising the applied levels of customs duties within our WTO bindings. This option has been exercised by the country, in recent past, on a number of products. The WTO rules also permit imposition of safeguard duties, over and above, the bound level of duties, in cases import surges causing serious injury to domestic producers.